

REMARKS

With this Amendment, Claims 1-27 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 11-12, and 15 have been amended as indicated above, Claims 19-27 have been added. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the scope of the previously unamended claims at a later date.

Discussion of Various Embodiments

This application is directed to novel structures related to snowmobile skis. In particular, the application discloses a snowmobile ski that can be coupled with suspension struts of a snowmobile. An embodiment of a ski 60, upon which amended Claims 1, 11 and 15 read, is shown in Figures 7 and 10, reproduced below.

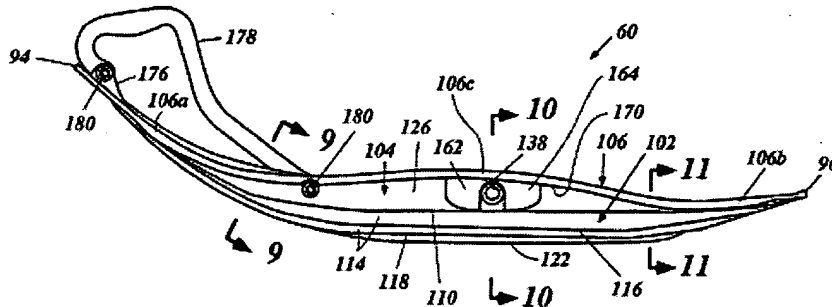


Figure 7

The ski 60 can include an elongated primary section 100, a keel section 102, a pair of vertical side sections 104, and a pair of horizontal wing-like sections 106, e.g., on opposite sides of a central plane CP. The primary section 100 preferably has a bottom surface 110 that contacts snow in use. The vertical sections 104 also can contact the snow when the ski 60 is in use.

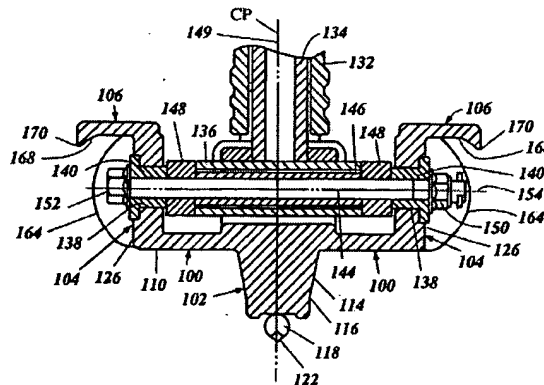


Figure 10

The structures for connecting the ski 60 to the snowmobile 30 can be located at the vertical sections 104. In one embodiment, the vertical sections 104 have apertures 138 at an elevation above the bottom surface 110 of the primary section 100, but within the snow contacting area of the vertical sections 104. A transverse member 136 coupled with the strut of the snowmobile (see Figure 1) can be supported on the vertical sections 104 by a bolt 144 or other member, e.g., by extending the support member through the aperture 138. In one embodiment, the bolt or support member is longer than a distance between the vertical surfaces 126.

Figures 7 and 10 illustrate that in some embodiments, a protective structure is provided on the vertical sections 104. In particular, a front protrusion 162 or a rear protrusion 164 can be provided to protect the bolt 144 or support member. The front protrusion 162 extends outward from the vertical surface 126 closely in front of the bolt 144 or support member. Where provided, the rear protrusion 164 extends outward from the vertical surface 126 behind the bolt 144. The front and rear protrusions 162, 164 can protect the bolt 144 from foreign materials such as, for example, stones or rocks while the snowmobile 30 proceeds forwardly or backwardly.

In another aspect, the ski 60 or a portion thereof can be symmetrical relative to a central longitudinal plane CP, shown in Figure 10.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Lemieux (U.S. Patent No. 6,692,009). Although Applicant disagrees with the rejection and with the Examiner's characterization of this reference, amendments have been made to expedite allowance of this application.

Lemieux

Lemieux is directed to a snowmobile ski with offset runner and keel. In particular, as shown in Figures 1 and 3, reproduced below, a snowmobile ski 10 includes a bridge 12, a ski body 14 having an inner lateral edge 18, an outer lateral edge 16, a top surface 20 adapted to be connected the bridge 12, and a bottom surface 22 adapted for moving over snow.

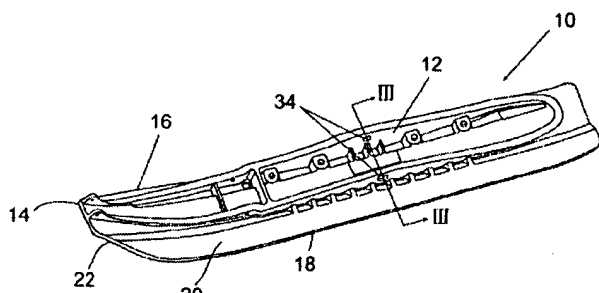


FIG. 1

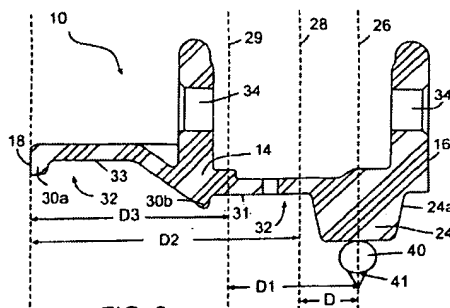


FIG. 3

The bridge 12 extends up from the top surface, and is not on the snow contacting side of the ski. The bridge 12 includes openings 34 and bushings 35 in a region above the top surface 20 for connecting the bridge 12 to a snowmobile “ski leg”. The ski 10 also includes a keel 24 running lengthwise along the bottom surface 22 of the ski body 14 in such a manner that a center line 26 of the keel 24 is offset from a center line 28 of the bridge 12 in a direction toward the outer lateral edge 18 of the ski body 14.

In contrast to Lemieux, Claim 1, as amended, recites a ski for a snow vehicle comprising:

a longitudinally extending primary section, said longitudinally extending primary section comprising a first generally horizontal surface, a forward portion of said first generally horizontal surface curling upward, a keel section extending downward along at least a portion of said primary section, and at least one generally vertical section extending upward along at least a portion of said primary section, said generally vertical section comprising a generally vertical surface that contacts the snow in use and that is connected to said first generally horizontal surface, the vertical surface including an aperture through which can extend a support member that couples the ski with a snow vehicle.

Applicant respectfully submits that Lemieux does not teach or suggest all of the foregoing limitations of Claim 1. Accordingly, Claim 1 is patentably distinguished over Lemieux. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claim 1 based on Lemieux.

Claims 2-10 depend from Claim 1 and further define the invention defined in Claim 1. For at least the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 2-10 are patentably distinguished over Lemieux. Claims 2-10 also are patentably distinguished over Lemieux in view of the additional limitations defined in each of these claims. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claims 2-10 based on Lemieux.

Similarly, Claim 11, as amended, recites a snow vehicle comprising:

a body, a frame assembly supporting said body, a ski being coupled with a steering mechanism that includes a support shaft and that is mounted to said frame assembly, said ski being steerable relative to said body, said ski comprising a longitudinally extending primary section, said primary section comprising a generally horizontally extending first surface, at least one generally vertical section extending upward from said primary section, said generally vertical section comprising a generally vertically extending second surface, and said second surface extending upwardly from an outer lateral portion of said first surface, said second surface comprising an aperture through which the support shaft can extend, said second surface contacting the snow in use.

Applicant respectfully submits that Lemieux does not teach or suggest all of the foregoing limitations of amended Claim 11. Accordingly, Claim 11 is patentably distinguished over Lemieux. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claim 11 based on Lemieux.

Claims 12-14 depend from Claim 11 and further define the invention defined in Claim 11. For at least the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 11, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 12-14 are patentably distinguished over Lemieux. Claims 12-14 also are patentably distinguished over Lemieux in view of the additional limitations defined in each of these claims. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claims 12-14 based on Lemieux.

Similarly, Claim 15, as amended, recites ski for a snow vehicle, the ski comprising:

a generally longitudinally extending primary section, said primary section comprising a generally horizontally extending lower surface, a keel section extending downward from said lower surface, a first generally vertically extending side surface for contacting the snow extending upward from said lower surface and a second generally vertically extending side surface for contacting the snow extending upward from said lower surface, said lower surface being generally interposed between said first and second generally vertical surfaces, at least one of said first and second vertically extending side surfaces comprising a mounting portion to which can be coupled a support member that is coupled with a steering mechanism, the at least one vertically extending side surface including a projection located forward of said support member for protecting said support member, a first generally horizontal upper surface extending laterally outward from said first generally vertical surface and a second generally horizontal upper surface extending laterally outward from said second generally vertical surface, and said first and second upper surface being disposed at an elevation higher than said bottom surface.

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Applicant respectfully submits that Lemieux does not teach or suggest all of the foregoing limitations of amended Claim 15. Accordingly, Claim 15 is patentably distinguished over Lemieux. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claim 15 based on Lemieux.

Claims 16-18 depend from Claim 15 and further define the invention defined in Claim 15. For at least the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 15, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 16-18 are patentably distinguished over Lemieux. Claims 16-18 also are patentably distinguished over Lemieux in view of the additional limitations defined in each of these claims. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claims 16-18 based on Lemieux.

New Claims

Each of the new claims depends from an independent claim that is allowable over the cited art. Thus these claims are allowable at least for the same reasons discussed above.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the above application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions which may be answered by telephone, he is invited to call the undersigned directly.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

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By:



Andrew M. Douglas
Registration No. 51,212
Attorney of Record
Customer No. 20,995
(949) 760-0404